

MINUTES
PARKS, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION ADVISORY
COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014
DPW OPERATIONS CENTER
2351 SPRINGBROOK COURT, BELOIT, WI

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Christiansen, Jeff Johnson, Chad Larson, Carol Mankiewicz, Therese Oldenburg, Mark Preuschl

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rebecca Charles, Keston Geistwalker, Mark Smullen

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Brian Ramsey, Director of Parks & Leisure Services
Greg Boysen, Public Works Director
Sheila De Forest, City Council

GUESTS: Nikki Meyers, Friends of the Riverfront

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mark Preuschl at 6:35 p.m.

REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 14, 2014 MEETING

Carol Mankiewicz made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Rodger Christiansen. Motion passed unanimously.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

None

OLD BUSINESS-

- A. Consideration and support of the New Playground Equipment scheduled for installation in Townview Park.** The playground unit in Townview Park is scheduled for replacement within the 2014 CIP Plan. A public playground meeting was scheduled for Wednesday evening June 4th at the Krueger Haskell Golf Course Clubhouse at 6:00 pm. The final decision was for the Miller & Associates layout representing BCI Burke. Chad Larson made a motion to accept and support the playground selected at the Public Playground Meeting seconded by Mark Preuschl. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion and consideration regarding a request to install an Eagles Viewing Platform in Schellenger Park (DeForest). A couple of residents were requesting to possibly have a nesting platform for the eagles. Brian Ramsey spoke with DNR and there is nothing that prohibits us from doing so. However; they are only here during the winter months and there is no guarantee that they will always return to the same location. If we do something or place a platform, that may disturb what they like and what they are used to. DNR suggested we do nothing. No further discussion, nor a motion was made.

C. Review and discussion regarding Parking Lots and curbing regulations. (Boysen). Greg Boysen shared copies of Community Development Director Julie Christensen's 5/15/14 email Re: "Parking Lots" which describes the city zoning ordinance Section 8-113 (d) which outlines concrete parking lot curbing requirements and Wisconsin Statutes 62.23 (5) which requires Plan Commission review of parking lot plans. Greg noted he also discussed parking lot curb regulations with City Engineer, Mike Flesh and City Manager, Larry Arft who are both concerned with the quality of the city's urban environment and establishment of precedence which could be created if any city owned parks did not comply with the parking lot design regulations. The commission's voting members felt no negative precedence would occur if City Council could amend the zoning ordinance to provide for the special nature of particular parks to serve as the basis for Plan Commission review and approval of particular city park parking lots to be built without curbs and perhaps permeable surfaces.

Discussion pursued. Council member DeForest suggested to the Commission a process to have this item placed on the agenda.

Mark Preuschl then recommended; "The Parks Commission makes a recommendation to City Council to consider a revision of the current parking lot construction specifications to allow a variance or exception for parking lots in public parks as deemed warranted by the nature of the park area with variances and waivers to be reviewed by and approved by the Parks Commission and Plan Commission, ex. (permeable surfaces as option and waving the need for curbs)."

Therese Oldenburg made a motion to send this recommendation to the City Council for their consideration. Motion seconded by Carol Mankiewicz. Motion passed unanimously. Brian Ramsey suggested that commission member's attend the Council meeting to speak their support for this recommendation.

NEW BUSINESS – ACTION REPORT ITEM

A. Review of a proposal submitted by Friend of the Riverfront to enhance the viewing location of the Kaleidoscope Sculpture in Riverside Park. Nikki Meyer stated that Jeff Adams from Beloit 2020 did not support the initial placement of the kaleidoscope and asked for it to be moved. In order to make this area more attractive and provide a viewing platform for all ages, Friends of Riverfront are suggesting that we install a stone

walking path and free standing rock base platform to enhance this location. Also FOR has arranged to have all the materials donated and has volunteers scheduled to complete this project at no cost to the city. If accepted, this project would be completed this fall. Prairie Avenue Concrete will move the kaleidoscope to its new location. Therese Oldenburg made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to make this selection seconded by Chad Larson. Motion passed unanimously. The Park Commission gave Nikki Myers a certificate of Appreciation for her dedication.

B. Consideration and Final Review in regards to the proposed Cell Tower installation in Telfer Park. For the past year, the Planning Division and the City's Attorney's Office has been negotiating with Verizon to install a new Cell Tower within the area of Shopiere Road and Cranston. The best location for this 105 foot tower was determined to be in Telfer Park. In order to construct this site, only one (1) tree will need to be removed to accommodate this project. This will bring in extra income to the city that we currently don't have which will be designated in a CIP fund for parks. Sheila stated that it is possible that residents may complain at the public hearing. If for some reason, this location can't be used, an alternate location will be by the new gas station on the corner of Prairie and Shopiere. Mark Preuschl made a motion to approve the current plan with the suggestion to choose another color other than white for the fencing seconded by Chad Larson. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Review of the proposal from the Bagarland Council of the Girls Scout in regards to the City's acquisition of the Girls Scout Center in Big Hill Park. The Executive Director and the Director of Property for the Badgarland Council for the Girl Scouts met with Larry Arft, City manager and presented a proposal in which they offered the City of Beloit the first opportunity to purchase the Girl Scout Center in Big Hill Park as outlined within their (1998) property lease contract. Even though there is not a definitive use of the facility at this time, we are in the process of creating a master plan which may include:

- Additional room rental: Weddings; Family Parties; etc..., (similar to RRC)
- Additional Programming Rooms: Day Camp; Nature Programs; etc...
- New Programs: Nature Center; Conference Retreat Center; etc...

This facility would not be staffed daily, but only when it's in use in order to minimize the Operational cost or until it starts generating significant revenue that would warrant additional staffing levels and additional open hours. The City Manager is preparing an additional CIP request of \$100,000 to cover the anticipated negotiated purchasing price and additional funds for any necessary repairs. We will be adding a new Cost Center to the 2015 Proposed Budget at approximately \$30,000 annually to manage the operational cost of the facility. There are more options of activities to do at this building than we can do at RRC. We would like to slowly move forward to see how much revenue we can make and use as rental space first. This is a great opportunity for the Parks & Leisure

Services Division as this facility will greatly enhance our operations and our ability to do more recreational programming and/or partner with other groups and organizations within the Beloit area in the use of this beautiful facility. The question came up about way finding signs. There aren't any that would show people how to get to Big Hill. That is something that will have to be looked into. There was discussion about the 2015 CIP not being impacted by this decision. Funds for other parks projects will not be affected. Mark Preuschl made a motion to support the City's desire to acquire this building, and suggest naming it the Big Hill Center seconded by Roger Christiansen. Motion passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- A. Correspondence-** The School District of Beloit has once again appointed Mark Smullen to serve as their representative to the Parks & Recreation Commission for the 2014-2015 school year. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has released a Public Notice related to Koi Herpes Virus likely causing carp die-off in Rock River. This notice states that it is not a risk to the general public but the use of protective clothing is encouraged when removing dead carp due to bacteria. These notices have been posted at the Riverside Park Lagoon and at the Wootton Park Boat Ramp. Carol Mankiewicz, from Beloit College volunteered her class to clean-up Springbrook Creek in Leeson Park on Saturday, August 23, 2014 weather permitting. Carl Lange, a volunteer with the BMHS Cross Country Team contacted us in regards to a new course lay-out for this year's meet. Mark Edwards and Brian Ramsey met with him on Wednesday, September 3rd and suggested some revisions/alternatives which he adopted in his final draft which we approved.
- B. Parks Report-** We continue routine maintenance in all of the parks as well as picking up litter and debris in all parks, trails, and cemeteries. We continue to trim trees and downed branches in parks, trails, and cemeteries also. All softball and baseball fields have been prepped. Repairs have been made to Summit Park. The interior rest rooms have been painted, the partitions in the rest rooms have been replaced, auto-door locks have been installed, and the picnic shelter has been painted. Contractors have been scheduled to repair the concrete walkways at the lower Moore Pavilion/Lagoon Docks, the Overlook @ Big Hill Park and the plank boards flooring @ the Gazebo located directly south of the RRC, along the River walk in Riverside Park. The chain-link fence at the entrance of Brown-Hatchett Park will be replaced with the wooden-rail style fence and the Tennis Courts @ Krueger Park will be striped for Pickleball play. The roadway in Leeson Park and Eastlawn Cemetery will be paved and the gravestones in Oakwood cemetery will be restored. The restrooms at Hilliard Park will be painted as well as the Gazebo @ the north-end of the Lagoon in Riverside Park, and the small shelter in Leeson Park. We assisted with the set-up for various community-based events. Also assisted the Horticulture Crew in widening and improving the Trails with stone.

C. Horticulture Report- Widened and improved trail surface by adding stone to Harper's Prairie, Stateline Restoration Prairie, The River Bluff Trail in Big Hill and additional stone for existing off-road parking areas in Big Hill. The 3rd Street Berm in Riverside Park West near the Wood Family Bridge will be completed to prevent potential flooding of Beloit Box Board. Installed a Historic Plaque/Sign on Turtle Island commemorating Roy Chapman Andrews. We assisted the Parks by installing the Playground Mulch in designated parks. The installation of Landscape Mulch in all city landscaping beds and streetscape beds, including Riverside Drive has been completed. We continue to weed and water plants in all park landscaping beds. We will also be assisting with the installation and relocation of the Kaleidoscope Sculpture in Riverside Park.

D. CIP Funds/Projects-

- 1) **Hinckley Park:** New playground—done! Cost @ \$50,000
- 2) **Townview Park:** The new playground from Miller and Associates is scheduled for installation the week of September 22-26, 2014. Cost @ \$40,000
- 3) **Park Amenities & General Improvements:** We have ordered the following amenities to enhance our city parks & plan to have installed yet this fall:
 - New Informational/Message Boards – 2 @ Big Hill Park = \$3,540.42
 - New Park Benches – placement TBD, 10 = \$4,848.00
 - New Goose Denier Lights – 3 @ Riverside Park & 1 @ Riverbend = \$2,109.69
 - New Goose Denier Lights – 1 @ KHGC = \$500.00
- 4) **Big Hill Park:** Roadway repairs and paving—completed by Engineering in 2013 @ \$15,000
- 5) **Leeson Park:** Roadway repairs and paving—completed by Engineering @ \$15,000
- 6) **Grinnell Hall:** Repairs completed to exterior balcony @ \$4,800
- 7) **Telfer Park:** Upgraded and replace SB Field Lighting @ \$13,080.00
- 8) **Golf Course:** Replaced Maintenance Garage Roof @ \$9,500
- 9) **Cemetery Projects:**
 - Oakwood Cemetery – gravestone restoration @ \$15,000
 - Eastlawn Cemetery – roadway repairs and paving completed by Engineering @ \$40,000
 - Eastlawn Cemetery – gravestone restoration will be deferred and funds reallocate to repair the glass block window in the old Water Tower @ \$4,800 estimated cost.
- 10) **Eagles Ridge Park:** Development of a paved Pedestrian Walking path around the perimeter of the parks; lowest bid received at \$67,435.75 by CCI. Engineering will be awarding the project to CCI and will yet to be completed this fall.

E. Big Hill Pedestrian Bridge- The new pedestrian bridge across Goose Creek in Big Hill Park will be installed by Custom Manufacturing (Clinton, WI) beginning the week of September 8-12, 2014. It will be a major link in the future development of the

Beloit-Janesville Bike Trail. This trail will connect the two communities at this location in Big Hill Park and is a gift from the Leadership Development Academy of Rock County who raised the funds for the purchasing and installation of this public bridge. The Leadership Development Academy of Rock County in partnership with the City of Beloit Parks & Leisure Services Division will be hosting a Ribbon Cutting Dedication Ceremony of the Bridge on Friday, September 19, 2014 at 10:00 am. Everyone on the Parks & Recreation Commission is encouraged to attend.

- F. Special Report: Oak Trees in Big Hill Park-** A man came into the Operations Facility and claimed that all the trees were going to die in Big Hill Park due to Oak Wilt. This complaint was given to Chris Walsh, Operations Director. As a professional logger, he could eradicate the problem by cutting down the trees with Oak Wilt and stop the spread of the disease to other trees. In order to take appropriate action, Mike Ferger, City Forestry Supervisor contacted Mark Guthmuller, WENR Forest Health Specialist who we met with in Big Hill Park to examine the issue. Mr. Guthmuller validated that there were a few spots where it appears we have some Oak Wilt, which is very common within Wisconsin as well as most states in the Midwest and East Coast. He provided various methods which the city could consider in regards to managing the issue. We could also just do nothing and let it take its course naturally. General information was attached that Mr. Guthmuller provided for the Commission to review.
- G. Recreation Report: September's Program Report-** Reference was made that a report was included in the packet for their review.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS

- Therese Oldenburg- Will be participating in the Wisconsin Master Naturalist program and is very excited about that.
- Chad Larson- The hockey rink is starting to be installed on Monday.
- Rodger Christiansen- None
- Carol Mankiewicz- Want's to know if horses are allowed in Harpers Prairie. She has seen evidence of them out there twice this summer. Brian states that horses are not allowed at any parks and if the problem gets worse, we will make signage to place out there.
- Sheila De Forest- Is thankful for Carol and her students cleaning up the parks. That was a great idea.

- Mark Preuschl- Would like to know if you can take bikes out on the Big Hill trail. Brian states that there is nothing prohibiting it. Also saw and was impressed with the stone benches at Picnic Point in Madison. Will be teaching his 1st of 4 photography classes at Grinnell Hall next week.
- Jeff Johnson- Inquired about the pier on the west side of the river. Also asked about WIFI being available at the Rotary Center. Greg and Brian stated that there is currently no funding to fill the gap. As far as WIFI, there is a building blocking the line of sight for the WIFI connection.

ADJOURNMENT

Jeff Johnson made a motion for adjournment; seconded by Therese Oldenburg. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Travia Foy.